

**MINDFUL ACTING:  
FREEING THE COMFORTABLE SELF ON STAGE**

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### **Abstract**

This thesis will explore how I can reduce the impact of anxiety on my stage performance and how I can be more comfortable, while finding ways to be unique as an actor. For this effect, a range of methodologies will be applied so that my self-awareness, self-respect and self-confidence as a performer can be increased and I can remain “in the moment” systematically. In this process, mindfulness meditation and cognitive behaviour therapy will serve as a framework. Practices such as yoga will be used as physical tools in order to reduce bodily tensions. This process will help to focus both the body and mind in harmony, and work to develop confidence will be supported with the approaches of several theatre practitioners. In particular, the application of techniques regarding awareness, being present and being in contact will be investigated. I will apply my findings and experiences to the character of The Bishop in the play *The Balcony* by Jean Genet.

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## 1. ANXIETY OF THE ACTOR AND MINDFULNESS

We can compare a man whose daily life is full of certain anxieties and distracted thinking patterns to a computer full of viruses and unnecessary information. One of the basic features of such a computer is that it starts very slowly. Sometimes it takes minutes as it needs time to awaken itself and activate. This time when opening a program or browsing on the internet can turn into a deadly waiting, just like an anxious person who needs time to adapt himself to work. When the computer sends a warning for an update, there will be a delay as its hard disk is full. This scenario is similar to a person with anxiety, who procrastinates and fails to act until the very last moment, because he fills his mind with distractive opinions instead of performing the required task. Just like an old computer that overheats for apparently no reason, or fails to recognize the device which is inserted into its USB slot, an anxious person closes himself off to others, fails to control his anxiety, and collapses. This computer can easily be an analogy of the actor Can Komleksiz, trapped in inefficient opinions and a limited self-perception.

I am an anxious person with my shy attitude coming from my childhood. My past experiences as the child of a broken family helped shape my habitual patterns of worrying about the future and about my vulnerable personality. The idea of going on stage was a journey I attempted in order to break out of my shell in my high school years, to feel more comfortable among people, to accept myself, and to create an authentic identity. Expressing the emotional on stage turned me into a remarkable candidate for acting. However, though finding comfortable ways to express the energy inside me after my first stage experiences and theatre education, I arrived at a deadlock. Just as is the case in my daily life, I chose a comfort zone for myself. Showing bold action on stage and challenging myself every day when the time came to act turned me into an anxious actor. Sometimes being on stage supported my ego and gave me periodic explosive power, although a hollow self-confidence. In the long run

I found that I was not self-confident enough to sustain being on stage and to try new techniques. In recent years I have felt trapped in social and performance-based anxieties and in my fears for the future. As I explored the foundations of my anxieties which have held me back as an artist, I found certain patterns of thinking and behaving. I discovered that many people, and especially artists, had these characteristics. For some artists traumas and fears turn into a creative power, whereas for me they act as barriers which hinder my job and my life. For my MFA in Theatre, I believe it is time that I tamed the critic inside me who restricts the authentic, self-liking and freely-reflecting Can Komleksiz. For this, I thought that first of all I had to understand and accept my situation completely. S. Ranchman defines anxiety as “one of the most prominent and pervasive emotions. It is a feeling of uneasy suspense, the tense anticipation of a threatening but obscure event ” (Ranchman, 26). It emerges as a situation which, unlike fear, is not based on a specific object but rather affects the general quality of life. One of its basic characteristics is creating situations which we believe to be threats based on our past experiences and current beliefs which cause one to seek an escape from those situations. These especially are characteristics that I know that I have.

### **1.1 Cognitive Therapy and Mindfulness**

After reading the answer to my artistic challenge proposal of one of my thesis advisors, Eric Armstrong, he directed me towards several texts focused on cognitive therapy which were always at my disposal but which I could not yet read until then. One of them was the book titled *Feeling Good* by David Burns. Burns claims that cognitive therapy is an effective method to rapidly regulate mood disorders and that symptoms could be eliminated with this method. He also argues that it is a tool for a person to protect himself in the future (10). He explains the first principle of this method as follows,

The first principle of cognitive therapy is that all your moods are created by your "cognitions " or thoughts. A cognition refers to the way you look at things—your

perceptions, mental attitudes, and beliefs. It includes the way you interpret things—what you say about something or someone to yourself. You feel the way you do right now because of the thoughts you are thinking at this moment (12).

He explains the impact of negative thoughts in the human mind as the second principle:

When you are feeling depressed, your thoughts are dominated by a pervasive negativity. You perceive not only yourself but the entire world in dark, gloomy terms. What is even worse—you'll come to believe things really are as bad as you imagine them to be (13).

These two principles were the cornerstones for me in understanding and working towards solving my anxiety in daily life and on stage. Thoughts, emotions and actions were parts of a cycle that affected each other. I realized that the rampant and uncontrolled flow of negative opinions in my mind affected my behaviors as well. My expectations of the things that could go wrong before I went on stage were created by this cycle.

I realized that another connected tool which could work for reducing anxiety was mindfulness meditation. During the year I semi-seriously explored the mindfulness meditation sessions led by Professor Paul Lampert, as I saw that mindfulness (and philosophies related to Buddhism) could have an important place in the treatment of my anxiety. The state of being completely in the moment and being fully aware of thoughts and the environment could cure the state of feeling being stuck in the past and the unknown future towards which my anxieties pushed me. In *The Art of Happiness*, the Dalai Lama says: “The greater our peace of mind, the greater our ability to enjoy a happy and joyful life” (Cutler, Kindle Locations 317). The Dalai Lama thinks that a peaceful mind prepares a person for the difficulties of daily life in a more self-compassionate way which, contrary to a lack of feeling, includes love and emotions.

Mindfulness lays emphasis on being fully aware of the present moment. Look at your



life carefully. Look at your actions – deeply. Are you living in the present moment, or are you allowing the past and the future to control your life? Mindfulness will help make your present count (Harris, Kindle Locations 157).

Being mindful is based on finding peace and giving in to the moment, not acting like we do not have emotions and opinions, but embracing and internalizing them with all our existence and defenselessness. In *Wherever You Go, There You Are*, Jon Kabat-Zinn defines the opposite of mindfulness as “mindlessness” or “unconsciousness” (Kindle Locations 95-97). The attempt of cognitive therapy to solve the anxieties for the future and twisted opinions concerning future expectations is similar to the transition from a mindless state to a mindful state. Kabat-Zinn supports this opinion as follows:

When we commit ourselves to paying attention in an open way, without falling prey to our own likes and dislikes, opinions and prejudices, projections and expectations, new possibilities open up and we have a chance to free ourselves from the straitjacket of unconsciousness (Kindle Locations 200).

Mindfulness technique based on Buddhist philosophy presents much more than just the goals of cognitive therapy. It is in a more transcendental place which covers both cognitive and behavioral dimensions and, for me, represents a gate which opens to artistic inspiration. For this, it acts as a framework which includes multiple ways of solving the situation in my own mind.

## **1.2 Procrastination and Mindfulness**

Procrastination is one problem which I frequently resort to when I fail to focus on the things that I have to do while I am overwhelmed with negative thoughts. It makes me feel good for a moment but in the long run it can lead to destructive cognitive problems. As I do not have strong cognitive instruments for dealing with my anxieties, the critic inside me begins to behave more aggressively when I do not do what I have to do or when I do them

late. Self-evaluative thoughts and avoidance-oriented coping strategies reduce my self-esteem and leave me full of anxieties. Negative thinking patterns that I display in certain situations and my failure to act compassionately and supportively towards myself are at the foundation of my procrastination habit and leave me defenseless. One of the most important results of my failure to feel adequately self-confident is that feeling of not having prepared properly.

Fuschia M. Sirois explains that,

Self compassion -- taking a kind and understanding stance toward oneself in instances of pain or failure rather than being harshly self-critical -- is an adaptive quality that may promote effective self-regulation, reduce the stress associated with self-blame and provide a buffer against negative reactions to self relevant events (Sirois, 2).

As can be understood, self-compassion can be used as an instrument for being more considerate towards one's own actions, therefore overcoming negative thought patterns. It has been found that procrastination leads to negative results both for mental and physical health. Stress is one of the factors which creates these physical outcomes. Recalling previous experiences with procrastination paves the way for further stress and negative self-perception (2).

In cognitive behaviour therapy, cognitive restructuring is seen as a coping strategy in dealing with stress and avoidance (4). Sirois argues that being mindful is an important element of self-compassion and that mindfulness can play an essential role in both creating a positive self-perception and in eliminating self-accusations related to the past.

Procrastination was associated with stress, low levels of mindfulness and less frequent practice of mindfulness promoting activities such as yoga and meditation. More importantly mindfulness mediated the association between stress and procrastination (4).

In his book titled *The War of Art*, Steven Pressfield claims that resistance is what strains the artist most in the process of creation and that procrastination is the expression of resistance,

Procrastination is the most common manifestation of Resistance because it's the easiest to rationalize. We don't tell ourselves, "I'm never going to write my symphony." Instead we say, "I am going to write my symphony; I'm just going to start tomorrow " (20).

Mental persuasion and conditioning mostly emerge when we want to postpone something. Pressfield thinks that the best way to overcome this resistance is to start the work directly. But how should we start? First of all, we have to understand that the resistance is not extrinsic but intrinsic (7). He coins resistance as “the enemy inside” and clearly shows the attitude that an artist should adopt (7). He claims that adopting professionalism instead of amateurism is the most important stance in overcoming the resistance (63). Artists should not wait for the inspiration; rather, they should start working and create their own inspiration. Artists should first accept that they are craftsmen (78). In the past, I noticed that when I had to start a work which required using my creative power, I acted amateurishly by mystifying the work, saying “I was not in the mood that day”. I was unable to see how my anxieties misguided and tried to defeat me. Pressfield sees resistance and procrastination as the enemies inside and thus he adds a different word to the critic inside ourselves. I prefer seeing the critic inside me as a person who has to be persuaded, through mindfulness, instead of seeing him/her as an enemy. Pressfield presents the importance of cognitive conditioning and mindfulness in an indirect manner. He claims that we have to defeat ego and reach the self. He claims that ego is the destructive and demanding side, whereas the self is the creative, constructive and inspired side of ourselves: “Dreams come from the Self. Ideas come from the Self. When we meditate we access the Self. When we fast, when we pray, when we go on a vision quest, it's the Self we're

seeking” (139). Referring to Jung, Pressfield claims ego is our status in daily life and the state in which we define ourselves as “I”. According to Jung, self is a more comprehensive being which includes our personal and collective subconscious as well (133). It is through self that a person becomes aware of himself, defines himself and seeks happiness. Ego pays attention to the extrinsic whereas self allows the hidden elements inside us and illuminates us. Such concepts as self-doubt and self-loathing are like shackles on the power inside us for inspiration and creativity. Such concepts as self-confidence and self-compassion open the door to transform a person mentally.

One of the most important elements of internal transformation is how to stimulate the self. How can I give myself the fuel I need? The answer to this question is to reduce extrinsic motivation and increase intrinsic motivation. I see intrinsic motivators as an essential cognitive auxiliary to overcome procrastination, work more efficiently, control anxieties and be more creative. Nicole Donovan's article titled *The Effects of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation on Cognitive Performance in Humans* defines extrinsic and intrinsic motivators as follows: “Extrinsic motivators tend to be a tangible reward like money or a prize. Intrinsic motivators tend to be a feeling of satisfaction, like accomplishment or achievement” (85). Extrinsic motivators also step in whenever we feel that we have to do something. They can exert pressure on a person and make him or her suffer from irrational expectations. For this research for my thesis, I have explored that if I use intrinsic motivators as far as possible, the feeling of living in the self on stage takes place rather than living in the ego on stage, which in turn makes it more possible to work on a text or a monologue, instead of postponing the work that I should do.

It is claimed that “the Zeigarnik effect” is another effect which can make people complete the works that are not completed,

Two sources of motivation to reengage an activity are the fact that it was left

unfinished and the fact that is intrinsically motivating. The motivation to reengage unfinished, interrupted activities is referred to as “resumption drive” and is discussed as the Zeigarnik effect (Reeve, 233).

The Zeigarnik effect is the will to complete a work as an unfinished work begins to occupy one’s mind. It is claimed that when we want to or have to complete a job, starting by doing a small part of the job can encourage a person to complete the work. For example, I will write a story and I have three months to finish it. If I write a few lines of the story on the first day, I become more focused on finishing the job. Every day that I do not work occupies my mind more. I saw that the Zeigarnik effect can be an important instrument that I can use in overcoming my habit of procrastination and remaining mindful as I witnessed its accuracy internally.

### **1.3 Through a Mindful Mind**

Coming back to the analogy of a computer, I can compare the image of an effective computer to a self-oriented version of myself rather than an ego-oriented one. Over-heating problems are solved. The data are collected in files. It doesn't take time to start a program. The chaos inside the machine is solved and now order takes place. Being an effective and anxiety-free person and artist will set me free in lots of areas, much like a new computer.

I have started to apply these new practices both in my private life and on stage. I realised that the most important part of the cognitive behaviour therapy and mindfulness is “awareness”. So I started to meditate for five to ten minutes in a quiet place. In order to set a barrier to my procrastination habit and to simplify things in my mind I started to create new habits slowly without overloading my system. I also used simple, elementary yoga postures before starting meditation to help the process evolve in an open body. Now I am meditating fifteen minutes a day. Slowly convincing my body to adopt a new habit allowed for more

progress than I imagined. I now see more clearly what is going through my mind. I accepted the negative thoughts that reduce my self-confidence. Ignoring and rejecting were reflections of being problem-oriented rather than solution-oriented. By accepting my thoughts, I have started to be more compassionate and understanding towards myself. By meditating I figured out my primary problem: feeling inadequate. I knew I needed to take a different path to convince my inner critic.

At the end of a month, in August 2018, after a slow but effective meditation process, I patiently started to apply cognitive therapy practices. In his book titled *The Solution to Social Anxiety*, Dr. Aziz Gazipura says that the main problem for people with social anxiety is the feeling of shame that follows inadequacy: “A major difficulty in social anxiety, however, is that we frequently feel like we are not good enough. This has been described as toxic shame” (29). Aziz Gazipura reinforced my awareness of having a feeling of inadequacy related to shame. Gazipura says that our inner critic tells us we will fail before we try, we are bad after not trying, we are not good enough and we act up more when we are scared (60, 61). I was aware that I needed to take notes about my cognitive distortions and negative sense of self. I would be able to be in a dialogue with my inner critic. I started to use Gazipura’s CBT-related 'Awareness Log' method,

This regular use starts to train your mind to perceive your thoughts and feelings more clearly. After doing this for just several days, you will start to notice yourself “catching” the propaganda of your self-critic and naturally finding alternative ways of viewing the situation that are more self-compassionate and realistic (141).

Via this method I started to journal about little situations that make me feel anxious. I described the situations in which I find myself frustrated, anxious and afraid, and checked in with my feelings about the situations and my body sensations. The log helped me figure out what was going on in my body. Then I wrote down the thoughts that occurred in my mind

during these situations. Before having automatic thoughts, in order to convince my inner critic, I wrote down new, more compassionate thoughts about the situations. I started with little, seemingly unimportant ones and added bigger ones afterwards. I think doing the process at a slow pace is an important tool in order for me to remain mindful.

I realised I have a few of the ten cognitive distortions described in David Burns' *Feeling Good*. These distortions are “a mental filter”, “jumping to conclusions”, “emotional reasoning” and “should statements” (41, 42, 43). I saw that a “mental filter” causes my negative thoughts to whitewash my positive features; “emotional reasoning” causes me to think my emotions are reflections about my inadequacies; “jumping to conclusions” causes me to make big generalizations from small negative situations; and “should statements” cause me to self-suppress. I realised that I was motivating myself with should statements, in order to complete my work in the programme. Emotional reasoning and should statements were making me act with extrinsic motivations and causing me to fall into my procrastination habit. In order to prevent my emotions from immobilizing me, I started to journal the things I procrastinate and wrote possible intrinsic motivations and positive results to starting and finishing the work.

I also witnessed the power of the Zeigarnik effect that pushes a person to reengage with the interrupted activities. I tested the effect with a monologue exercise. I memorised the first three sentences of a monologue and stopped working on it for a few days. My mind was stuck on the interrupted activity and was blaming me and increasing my anxiety. I invented a rule called 'the twelve-hour rule'. I started to engage with the work or the job in twelve hours. After gaining that first momentum the troublesome relationship to the work transformed, and it became more joyful.

To conclude, I discovered that through self-awareness, being mindful and restricting my procrastination habit, I can decrease the effects of my negative thoughts on my emotions and

actions. I believe that if I learn to be more mindful, more self-confident, more at peace with myself and my responsibilities, I can be more confident with my partners on stage and have a more real, authentic connection.

## **2. UNDERSTANDING *THE BALCONY***

Before I test my artistic challenge with the role of The Bishop in the play *The Balcony*, I need to introduce the atmosphere of the play and Jean Genet. It is a must to understand the world in which Jean Genet was born, his view of life, and what the play *The Balcony* and the role The Bishop represent. For this reason, firstly it is necessary to understand who Jean Genet is.

### **2.1 Jean Genet: The Bastard**

The first thing that we have to know about Jean Genet is that he was raised as an adopted child. He was born in 1910 in Paris and there is not much information about his past (Driver 3). Between the Cold War years, he was born in the modernist values of the industrialized world. Tom F. Driver says that Genet's "project in life has been to transform accident into necessity" and he adds,

Cast off at birth he came to love those who are rejected and who reject each other. He sought the company of those whose love, though passionate, is false, because it is founded on betrayal (3).

Genet was in an artificial and cold mission-oriented relationship with his foster family instead of a love relationship (3). He was raised with Catholic beliefs in a rural settlement between the village school and the church (Bradby, Finburgh 5). Children in foster families were taken care of not much better than slaves. Genet and other foster children of the time were raised in a feeling of isolation in their environment (Bradby, Finburgh 5, 6).



Genet began to commit robbery as a reflection of an artificial and dissatisfied childhood (Bradby, Finburgh 6). Existentialist author Jean-Paul Sartre stated that Genet's path to robbery and vagrancy was created as a result of social humiliation and existentialist acceptance.

Genet made the foundational choice which brought into being the character he was to become: he decided that if society chose to brand him as a thief, he would accept the label and would devote himself to pursuing everything that was the opposite of a moral code founded on the sanctity of property (Bradby, Finburgh 6).

Driver argued that it would be unwise and unfair to attribute anti-social behaviors of Genet to his childhood experiences in the reformatory facility to which he was sent after his robbery conviction (Driver 3). Punishment and punishers played the role of enforcers, not restrainers, in his life. We understand that the ethical codes of the environment in which he was raised and its exclusive reality based on these codes forced Genet to make a choice for his future. He chose to be a part of the marginalised people who were deprived of love, created by the system's all-consuming oriented greed.

In the period when Genet lived and left a mark, which is mostly the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, homosexuality was illegal in Europe and Genet flaunted his homosexuality further due to its illegality. He possessed and praised his otherized homosexual personality by waging a war against social norms (Bradby, Finburgh 11). According to Sartre, he defended his homosexuality and robber personality against the oppression and cruelty of his childhood and opened the path to freedom (14). The foundation of his authorship was based on the reflection of his marginalised personality.

## **2.2 Theatre of Jean Genet**

Drama texts written by Genet reflected the lives, problems and dilemmas of the lower class of which he was a member. While doing this, he rejected industrialized society and corporate capitalism (Brooks, Halpern 32). His life as a robber and his occasional imprisonments are products of this rejection. Sociologist Lucien Goldman claimed that the living standards idealized by capitalism offered a certain consumer standard and that with these material opportunities it united people partially (33). However, he emphasizes that these opportunities do not add uniqueness to a person or provide space for his or her intellectual and emotional development (33). He sees that the lower middle classes and the middle classes are emotionally suppressed and squeezed in this capitalist order (33). Such suppression paved the way to certain dichotomies, which play an important role in the world of drama created by Genet,

This world pivots on the relation between the ruled and the rulers: the maids and madame, the rebels and the balcony, the blacks and the whites, the colonial and the colonists. It is a dialectical relationship, one of hatred and fascination (Brooks, Halpern 35).

In Genet's writings the dichotomy of the ruler and the ruled is in the forefront. This power relation and alteration of it also affect the relation between love and hate. This love/hate relationship can be made possible with the admiration felt by the ruled for the ruler (35). This admiration and the transformation of power relations were explicitly cultivated in *The Balcony*. In the first plays of Genet (such as *The Maids*, *The Balcony* and *The Blacks*), we witness the process of the ruled altering in different roles.

In *The Maids*, Claire plays Madame and Solange plays Claire. In *The Balcony*, minor employees play a bishop, a judge, a general. In *The Blacks*, Negroes on the balcony play whites and below, on the stage, enact the purely imaginary murder of a white woman (35).

In Genet's drama, role-playing includes the adoption by a character of roles with different social statuses. Payal Nagpal defines role-playing as follows: "a theatrical device by which an actor playing one role has the liberty to play another role" (Nagpal 17). A person adopting a different role in search for freedom coincides with this definition. In Genet's theatre, people in lower classes of the society adopt fantasy rituals (different roles) so as to overcome their rulers and earn their freedom.

In Genet's plays, the text is written in a manner which is distinct from traditionalism. Events and scenes are tied to each other in a way which the reasoning of the audience cannot follow, challenged by the irrationality represented in the plays (Nagpal 21). This means that while the viewers try to comprehend the play with their reason through their social status, the events on the stage will confuse them, which will lead the viewers to review their social status (21).

In Genet's theatre, sexuality is used as a tool. Genet can be viewed as a pornographer; the "language of sexuality" he used in his works is different from other authors and the details in his use of pornography are unique (Driver 5). He does not use sexuality to shock the audience, add humorous effect to his works, or override censorship (5). Tom F. Driver explains the real reason for Jean Genet's use of sexuality: "It is the starting point for everything else and the point to which all returns" (5). Genet realized that his behaviors and imagination were a function of his sexuality and that he could not do without it. Driver argues that Genet's use of sexuality is also mythopoeic,

It structures and renders available to consciousness the meaningful world. The raw sensual data are fed to the conscience and "located" with regard to the self by the will. They enter a dialectical formation with the intelligence (6).

Sexuality in Genet's works presents examples of the results of the dichotomy between reason and sexuality which has been continuing for centuries. Genet's pornography is related to Freud's view of sexuality. It is a phenomenon which lies in the essence of existence and takes a person on major voyages.

Similar to the usage of the love/hate relationship by Genet, his relation to love and violence is also essential. As a part of his homosexual side and his acceptance, Genet added violence into the nature of heterosexual relations in his works (Driver 8). Finding a mission in revolting against social norms, Genet uses it as a method,

Violence becomes the essence of the relationship, its major component.

Tenderness, joy, affection, the regard for the other's well-being become subordinate elements which do no more than flavor an affair and sometimes render it poignant (8).

In Genet's world, the society is turning into "anti-society", while love is turning into "anti-love" (8).

### **2.3 *The Balcony***

*The Balcony* (*Le Balcon*) was published in 1956. "It was the first work written by Genet after he had gained a wide audience and achieved a literary reputation" (Driver 33). At the time it was written, the effects of Nazi Germany were still effective and dictator figures were alive. Genet very well realized how power symbols changed the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the capitalist new world order, drove it into war and left people in the dichotomy of love and hate. In the play *The Balcony*, he set the authority figures between reality and imagination.

The first few scenes of the play happen in different rooms of a brothel. The audience watches what happens behind the closed doors of a brothel (Bradby, Finburgh 61). In the first

scene we see a bishop with a mitre, cothurni (shoes of Greek tragic actors) and a vestment. He is large and long in his costume (Driver 34). This man is a customer who lives his fantasy in a bishop's costume. In the scene we see the owner of the brothel, Irma, and one of her girls (34). We understand that the person that we believe to be a powerful figure in the beginning of the play is just a simple man. He pays to live his fantasy in this brothel or, in other words, "house of illusions". A few scenes later we see other customers realizing their fantasies, role-playing judge and general. In the following scene, we see a woman whipping an old man, which is in contrast with the previous scenes (34).

The love/hate feeling for the rulers in Genet's plays is essentially related to the manner with which these customers seek their freedoms in the "house of illusions". The admiration of the first three customers for the system make them wear the costumes of power symbols; the fourth customer, on the other hand, chose a tramp outlook, which is the reflection of his hatred or rejection of the system. Customers need an antithesis so that they can feel entirely in their roles i.e. a sinful girl for the bishop or a robber for the judge (Bradby, Finburgh 62, 63). It is ironic that all four people seek their way to freedom in a brothel. However, it is also very human, as sexuality and violence (as I mentioned before) are the cornerstones of our reality according to Genet.

The political importance of the play should also be mentioned,

...is a political play, but a very unusual one. It deals, not with political programmes for reform, nor with a given way of ordering society, but with political desire... This is the dream of Roger and his group of rebels (64).

In the play, Roger and other rebels want to establish a power structure which can dive deep into the wishes of the people. However, political desire will force the rebels to resort to

archetypes such as queen, bishop, judge and general (64). Bradby and Finburgh explain the importance of archetypes as follows,

The fact is that these elites, though hated by many, are desired by many more. The effect of the first three tableaux was to show the deep roots of such power symbols in the collective psyche, and their obscure appeal. For as the story of Roger's defeat unfolds, Genet suggests that most people in fact desire to be dominated (64).

In the end of the play, Irma, the brothel owner, turns into a queen and the bishop, judge and general transform into their roles, which indicates that political efforts will always be defeated by the concept of power. As long as the people see power at the top of a hierarchical structure and themselves as a piece of this hierarchic structure, the system will continue, albeit with minor differences. The main theme of *The Balcony* can be seen as "the real world saved by the illusory one" (Driver 36). The owner of the "house of illusions", Irma, maintains government symbols and keeps the people alive. Irma is the new queen. Irma is like a seller who sells imaginary products. It is believed that she does the business of evil as she is a brothel owner, but as a queen, she has exactly the same characteristics. The audience may have some questions in mind: how innocent, good and ethical are people we see as a queen, bishop, judge and general? Or are the things we see as ethical or good even relevant? Driver argues that it becomes impossible to know whether Irma is a protector or a traitor in the political order,

Her opposite is not the "normal" world but pure rationality. The latter is not constructive. It can mount revolutions and fire machine guns, but it cannot govern or inspire love, because it is pure function devoid of status (37).

This means that as long as rationality exists, as the need to compress people to a certain order and shape exists, all revolutions will have the same end. Real or artificial, symbols and rituals will be the similar in a society in search of rationality. It is for this reason that Irma

addresses the rational audience or citizens in the end of the play: “You must go home now and you can be quite sure that nothing there will be any more real than it is here” (Genet 61).

## 2.4 The Bishop

The Bishop appears with two different statuses in the play. The first one is his personality outside of the “house of illusions”, which is a middle-class gasman. His second personality is his imaginary one in The Bishop costume. The Bishop questions the meaning of life inside this costume. His costume is a gate which protects him from the stale reality of the world and opens to the world inside his mind. At the end of the first scene, his costume is taken off and he says: “Vestments! Mitres! Lace! Above all, my gilded cope - you protect me from the world” (Genet 7).

The costume worn by The Bishop at Irma’s brothel shows him larger than he is; the mirrors in the room make him look even bigger. He sees himself larger than he can be in real life. This largeness calls The Bishop to a more thorough test. Payal Nagpal explains it,

In Irma’s brothel he is free of the usual pressures and is able to look at the otherwise hidden nuances of being a bishop. The clash of the role as fantasy with the fantasy of the middle-class man in the environs of the brothel changes its meaning. It is indeed a paradox that it is the world of fantasy that is able to present reality in its stark form (Nagpal 45).

The most important detail of the role of The Bishop, which is my thesis role, is probably hidden in the citation above. We are watching the voyage of a middle-class man who searches for his own personality in a world of fantasy full of sex and violence. Maybe the masks we wear in our daily lives are filling the gaps that we want to cover. Filling these gaps is an instrument for us to feel complete. The Bishop finds himself a world that will fill his gap and

is not willing to let it go. For him, the mask being illusion or real does not matter; what matters is that it makes him feel completed.

### 3. SEEKING THE COMFORTABLE ACTOR

Being mindful means being open and ready to change. A mindful person doesn't get stuck on things that don't work for him or her. That's why I was in search of new tools throughout my artistic challenge application process. The techniques I found and applied on the preparation process for my thesis role were products of an intention to be mindful.

The intention to be mindful first showed itself in Paul Lampert's acting classes. After working on monologues in the first few weeks of acting classes with Professor Paul Lampert, I realised that a certain amount of anxiety can be used to bring more energy to the stage. I was working on a character who was driven with anxiety and trauma. I concentrated on my bodily sensations caused by anxiety and found out that reduced anxiety state is controllable. Through controlling anxiety on stage, I was able to transform it to different emotions such as anger and resentment. I wanted to keep this process alive and tried to use a meditation practice that I will discuss in an upcoming chapter. In a book titled *Psychology for Performing Artists*, Glen D. Wilson points out the following,

The first thing to note is that anxiety is not always detrimental to performance. A certain degree of emotional arousal is usually beneficial to performance, including even a level of anxiety which might be uncomfortable and unwelcome to the performer himself (Wilson 209).

The study conducted by Konij on four Dutch actors showed that a certain amount of excitement during performance could affect the relation between performance quality and audience (Wilson 209, 210, 211). My understanding that anxiety could be used as a functional



stage tool changed my relationship with anxiety. Instead of only being stuck on the idea of eliminating anxiety, a higher level of awareness and acceptance took place.

My procrastination habit decreased on preparation for a text or a role. I started to feel more ready, more playful and more impulsive. I especially experienced this new state in *Middletown* rehearsals. Instead of waiting for inspiration and avoiding failure I tried to challenge myself on stage. Another example is the Shakespeare in High Park auditions. Although playing Shakespeare was one of my biggest fears, I chose to participate in SIHP auditions. I was able to stay mindful and manage my anxiety on the audition with the techniques I discussed in the next sections. But I have to say, my procrastination habit is still a part of my life. My twelve-hour rule worked for smaller tasks like getting prepared for auditions, but it didn't work for bigger tasks like writing a thesis. One of the other reasons why it didn't work was having to work in physically demanding jobs in my spare time.

### **3.1 Comfortable Mind, Voice and Body**

I believe my increasing ability on accent work in Professor Eric Armstrong's voice classes in the 2018 fall term was accomplished by my changed relationship with my anxiety and use of the Awareness Log (see Appendix A). I raised the hope that I can accept my anxiety with its different potentials and use it as a meaningful tool. In Professor Erika Batdorf's movement classes in the 2018 winter term, we consciously contacted our bodily sensations via breath, blood, gravity, digestion, pain, and pleasure to enhance our interoceptive awareness. Due to the union strike, our classes were left half finished. But from what I learned in the classes, I wanted to add the interoceptive awareness experience to my meditation rituals in order to be able to shift my anxious state to different emotional states. In this context, I started to practice my version of meditation practice that connected me with my interoceptive awareness. It wasn't as hardcore as we did it in the classes and I didn't use stimulative songs in the process. But by doing so, I tried to observe where the anxiety lives in my body. Although I couldn't

discover as deeply as I wanted, I saw it as a useful experience because it matched the nature of meditation's sensory focus.

My main practice is still mindfulness meditation because it has been a very useful tool for me to calm my mind throughout the programme. But I also practiced affirmation-involved meditation practices and guided meditations. I used all of these to explore the changes that meditation can create in my acting life. Another element which seemed remarkable to me in the holistic acting training of Michael Chekhov was his usage of affirmations (see Appendix B). Lenard Petit, in his book *The Michael Chekhov Handbook*, in which he incorporates his own point of view on Chekhov's technique, says that affirmations will lead the actors to acceptance of their own body, and will transform them into the ideal actor (Petit 19). For me, this means that he confirms the impact of positive thinking patterns on a creative acting process. These affirmations also seemed to evoke my inner motivations. Therefore I included similar affirmations in my meditation practice before rehearsals of *Middletown*.

I used the Awareness Log method which I discussed before on the days when I felt inadequate, self-doubting and uncomfortable. Slowly my feeling of inadequacy began to vanish. I have identified related feelings and sensations in these uncomfortable situations while using the Awareness Log. Writing compassionate thoughts instead of self-destructive ones and seeing how this process changes my actions and feelings was similar to the process of an actor's character study. I began to know myself better and became more aware. This awareness led to a certain amount of self-confidence. My concerns about the English language started to decrease with both practice and awareness. However, I was also aware that there were external and uncontrollable factors which increased my anxiety. In *Middletown* rehearsals I tried to observe when anxiety was caused by my thoughts and when it was created by external factors. I have observed that if the factors (actors, director, location, group dynamics, etc.) are positive and supporting each other, my anxiety does not increase.

But if these factors are negative, my anxiety increases. I paid attention to the fact that external causes of anxiety did not make me internally self accusing. This experience has also helped me to become aware of the anxiety that I may have given to my colleagues and to act more responsibly.

I have known from the day I began in the programme that I had anxiety-related breath and voice issues. Betsy Polatin, in *The Actor's Secret*, includes voice and breathing exercises emphasizing that larynx suspension is important in using the voice accurately,

Losing the suspension in your larynx can have many causes, including any downward pull of your head, or the collapsing of your chest, or even stage fright or anxiety (Polatin 127).

Supporting Betsy Polatin's views, I realised in a workshop by David Smukler at York University that I did not speak with the natural tone of my voice. My anxiety was increasing while acting in English. I was screeching and my voice was tensed. I wasn't suspending my larynx. In the same workshop, Smukler stated that our emotions were connected to the center of our body where inspiration and creativity came from. In order to protect the natural form of the voice, one had to connect this center. Mike Alfreds in *Different Every Night: Freeing The Actor* defines the actor's center,

Their energy should flow from the centre without restriction, which means the body must be totally free of unnecessary TENSIONS. The centre is about two centimetres below the belly button. It is connected with the gut where emotions are most felt, with the pelvis which supports the torso, and balances the body, with the sex organs, and with the breath (Alfreds 348).

I began to use spine, ribs and pelvic bowl exercises that I had learned from David Smukler, larynx suspension exercises from Betsy Polatin's book, and basic yoga exercises. In Professor Erika Batdorf's classes, we did a great deal of jumping, running, and body-flexing movements

with the purpose of operating large muscles. I started to incorporate them in my exercise routine, and finally added voice and breath exercises that I learned from Professor Eric Armstrong. I aimed to keep this routine for thirty minutes. I felt that after every exercise routine, I had a better connection with my center. I also felt that my voice came from a deeper, more effortless place. As a side note, I also realised that physically heavy jobs, which I have been doing since the summer of 2018, have developed my diaphragm capacity and strengthened the muscles that support my center.

Being totally centred makes one totally vulnerable to all possible FEELINGS. Because of this, many actors avoid or deny their centre, creating TENSIONS as barriers to its access. Strained voices, physical TENSIONS, lack of spontaneity are symptoms of being off-centre (Alfreds 348).

My exercise routine was and is helping me. But I know that overcoming my anxiety and fears through changing thinking patterns is more beneficial. For this reason, I am aware that there is a process ahead of me which requires mental triumph. Aziz Gazipura states that while fighting anxiety, the anxious state will transform with a sudden shift as a result of consistent practice (Gazipura 146). I cannot say that the shift has occurred yet but I am approaching that point slowly. I am also aware that for a shift to happen in my acting journey, I need to be mindful of choosing the right acting techniques.

### **3.2 A Process-Oriented Journey**

Director Jackie Maxwell tried to create a play in daily reality and simple communication quality in the rehearsals of *Middletown* that we started in December 2018 and finished in late January 2019. My character had the most visible character arch. I wasn't the same person at the end of the play. So it was important to be convincing. In the course of rehearsal Jackie asked many questions of us about our characters' given circumstances, objectives, obstacles and the details in the text. She tried to open up our creative channel instead of imposing her

thought and the images in her head. For this reason, the arch of my character emerged naturally out of my own reality.

While working with Jackie, we returned to the text whenever we came to a deadlock. We searched in detail and looked for clues. Working with Jackie was like working with the curiosity and instincts of a detective. In this process I came across the book *Different Every Night: Freeing The Actor*, written by Mark Alfreds, which I mentioned before. Alfreds states that an actor should focus on the process and not on the result (Alfreds 37). The director should present the text and its layers to the actors and then leave the possibilities and choices to the actor. According to Alfreds, actors are the primacy of theatre and they should be freed (Alfreds 12). To create a play like a living organism, actors should be able to play flexibly under specified circumstances. This means that actors should not be like objects used in blocking on stage but as the lungs which give breath to drama.

Sanford Meisner stated that while playing a scene, one should play with impulses instead of mutual clues (Meisner, Longwell 73). He claims that impulses and emotions will come when a good command is developed for the text. I realised that while working with Jackie I played with impulses instead of cues because the director was giving more importance to the relations of the characters. Jackie was leading us to a process-oriented journey. Everyday there was a new revelation. I began to internalize the text more and more every passing day. The command of the text made me start to think in the character. I was using 'I' while speaking about the character. I used to tend to say 'he'. Meditation exercises before the rehearsals, affirmations related to inner motivation and tension-reducing exercises also made it easier to enter the world of the text by reducing my anxiety. Jackie's comforting attitude led to a remarkable decrease in the anxiety of both myself and the group. We felt more attached to the script, to the world we created and felt more responsible towards each other.

### **3.3 Intentions for *The Balcony***

Before starting the rehearsals of *The Balcony*, I took my *Middletown* experience as a reference. I infused myself to be process-oriented. As an actor, I always thought that I had good impulses and instincts. I witnessed that mindfully especially in *Middletown* rehearsals. I was more present on the stage, and listening to the other actors more. Without thinking of the next move, and trying to create certain clichés, I played by being faithful to the text which activated my impulses.

*The Balcony* does not have a classic structure and its chronology is mixed. The play will be staged in a theater hall that has a medium-sized house and a big stage. It will be a challenge for me as I have always played in the black box before. But if I stay loyal to my exercise routines, have a command on the text, be patient to use my instincts, and be mindful to search for new tools I will feel more present and less anxious on stage. It will lead me to find the truth of The Bishop in *The Balcony*.

#### **4. THE BALCONY REHEARSALS**

Mike Alfreds says that “actors have a two-pronged start to the work on a role: instinct and analysis, the subjective and the objective” (Alfreds 204). He argues that good actors first have to have good command of the text and then try to use their instincts patiently (205). I would have to motivate my instincts and impulses after reading the text with the director of *The Balcony*, Margaret Legere, and internalizing her points-of-view on the text. We started to read the edited version of the text with the Legere in the first week of rehearsals. However, while reading the scenes, we didn’t use a dramaturgical approach. Starting from scene one, we talked about the words chosen by Legere in the text and what they meant for the actors in the group. Some words were useful as images. But I have to say that the process of speaking about the words didn’t create an understanding about Legere’s dramaturgical approach and relations between characters. There was only one useful side of this process for me. While discussing the words about the first scene, we chose some words that are related to the

Catholic Church. The opinions and suggestions of some actors who were raised with Catholic beliefs began to give me a picture about the Catholic world. The day we discussed the words ‘Gilded’ and ‘Episcopal’, I thought the two words overlapped in quality. If my character was gray in his daily life, he wanted to take on the role of The Bishop and take on a gilded color.

While I was answering the twenty-five questions that Professor Paul Lampert introduced us to in acting classes, I named my character ‘Jean’. It was known that he was a middle-class gasman who was married and had a son. I chose the name Jean due to its similarity with my real name. I did not choose it to make reference to Jean Genet. From now on, when I talk about The Bishop, I will also use the names ‘Jean’ and ‘Gasman’ interchangeably. ‘Jean’ (namely ‘Gasman’) will refer to his daily life persona and ‘The Bishop’ to his ideal persona.

While reading the play we started to do rehearsals in the studio. A small replica of the theatre hall was created in the Centre for Fine Arts studio. The replica of the real stage design was created using a few pieces of fabric hanging from the ceiling and the staired structure in the middle. We began the rehearsal process by making improvisations with pieces of cloth. These improvisations were going to be used in intermissions and to represent locational changes in the world. Right after this process (based on collective experiments and suggestions), we began to block the play immediately. From the very beginning of the rehearsals, we started blocking the moments that we found through improvisations in intimacy studies and other pictured moments chosen by Legere while also working on exits and entrances. I use the word ‘chosen’, because we offered her several choices while trying to play impulsively. We didn’t actually have time to reassess our impulses and choose from what we found organically. We began to block the first scene where I actually start the play. This blocking forced me and my stage partners to play in between these moments. This meant that I entered the result-oriented working process which I feared from the very beginning. I began

to be confused about how I could use my impulses throughout the rehearsal as I was planning to create my character organically with text.

At the end of the first month, after mainly working on blocking and not being able to talk about the dramaturgy of the play, I spoke with the director in more detail about the character. She asked me questions about the character which I had answered already. She asked me to carry them to the stage more effectively. But I was still anxious as it did not feel right to play between certain pictured moments. In addition, the text was constantly being trimmed and the dynamics of my character with other characters began to change. For example, in the seventh scene (where I next appeared after the first scene), Carmen took us to the entrance of the brothel and convinced us in turning our roles into reality. This scene was essential for the transformation of my character. However, the director structured this scene mostly on images and poses. The last scenes in which I was involved were being worked through at the end of the rehearsals. So I felt like I turned into an actor who was just posing on the stage. Frankly there was no scene other than the first scene where I thought that I could use my impulses. We were strictly working on a result-oriented process and progressing in a stylistic manner. My anxiety was increasing. I had to make a choice. I decided to accept the stylistic structure of the play. In order to do this, I had to transform pictured moments and cues into an impulsive, lively place.

I was troubling myself with thoughts like ‘I need to be good! This is my thesis role! I need to understand what is going on in every scene!’. If I said these sentences to myself repeatedly, I knew that the feeling of inadequacy would take place and block my process. Thanks to the Awareness Log, I could change the destructive thoughts to ‘I don’t need to be good! I just need to do my best! Everybody is struggling in their own way!’ I leaned towards intrinsic motivations so that I could accept the process as it was and I could do my best. After the first month, in order to keep calm and overcome my anxiety, I mostly focused on using my



affirmation-involved meditation practices. Then I started to use the acting tools that would make me feel more comfortable in the world of the play.

In the first scene, Jean insists on role-playing even though there is a rebellion happening outside the brothel. He is one of the customers who spends the most time at the brothel. He insists on not going home where his wife and child are waiting. This is where the strength of the super-objective of the character comes. In order to feel more attached to Jean, I pulled the character to me and my own objectives. Would I be able to adopt my ideal persona, despite the persona who wants to overcome anxiety and be free? If The Bishop was a person who is free of anxieties and worries, Gasman was a person who was forced to live with his anxieties. I decided to find the distinction between The Bishop and The Gasman with psychological gesture. Michael Chekhov defined psychological gesture as follows,

In the qualities and sensations, we found the key to the treasury of our feelings. But is there such a key to our will power? Yes, and we find it in the movement (action, gesture). You can easily prove it to yourself by trying to make a strong, well-shaped but simple gesture. Repeat it several times and you will see that after a while your will power grows stronger and stronger under the influence of such a gesture (Chekhov 63).

I chose two sentences that Jean spoke as a gasman and a bishop. I used these sentences while finding the psychological gestures in the movement. The gesture I found for The Bishop looked like an eagle with open wings. The gesture I found for Gasman was like a mouse pinched into a breadcrumb. I was surprised to explore such extreme aspects of my character. I felt that I could sustain these two psychological gestures in my body simultaneously and add to stylized scenes. One day when we worked on the first stage with Margaret I carried both psychological gestures to the stage. The gestures motivated my impulses. The centre of The Bishop was in his chest whereas the centre of my Gasman character was in his stomach.

Gasman was more easily taken on by his emotions whereas The Bishop had full self-confidence. The word ‘gilded’ completed the character as an image with vestments, mitre, crook and the psychological gestures of The Bishop. On the other hand, Gasman was an image in a bloody, grey, potato sack. Psychological gesture served as an essential tool in creating my character, acting the stage objectives and actions, and being able to breathe in such a stylistic world. The distinction between The Bishop and The Gasman was more clearer. In my character work, Jean’s wife was an authoritative Catholic woman, almost like a nun, without a strong conflict in his character. Although Jean loves, he needs a big shift in his marriage: more fantasies, more flexibility. So, in the first scene, Jean as a bishop pictures the prostitute girl like a wife in his dream: a sinful nun, a troubled soul, a wife open to fantasies. She was the air that Jean needed to fly over like an eagle. When Irma ordered me to get out of the room I began to drag the girl, which was like the last flutters of an eagle to prevent falling. Being a mouse was the most fearsome nightmare of an eagle. I felt more successful in playing the actions and adding impulsivity between the pictured moments.

I felt like my process was restricted. There were things that haven’t been answered and for me they were important to be answered in order to keep a meaningful arc in the play. For example, why did The Judge, The General and The Bishop still have make-up on their faces after the seventh scene? It was an unanswered question when I asked the Director about it. I felt like they shouldn’t have make-up because they represented real authority symbols. Or, why did The Envoy become very magically powerful towards the end of the play? For me, Irma was Jean Genet and events were happening in her brothel. That’s why she spoke the last monologue to the audience. After many cuts, the power of The Bishop was gone too. After many cuts in the text of scene ten, why did I still conspire with Irma about Chantal’s death? Yes, I loved Irma, I loved the world she created in the brothel, I felt responsible to her. If I am powerful enough to conspire with Irma, why did I continue to act like a customer? I

felt like I was not very effective and able to show a consistent arc after the first scene. But I still tried to keep the intentions of the character I had built for myself. I went back and forth between my psychological gestures and tried to keep myself alive.

When the time for preview came, the only disadvantage of playing on a big stage was that I had not overcome the tension in my voice. My anxiety was still bothering me. I went back to my larynx suspension exercises but I still could not push my voice to my center as much as I wanted. But my body was, on the other hand, in the desired state. My bodily tensions were decreased. However, on the opening night, my bodily tensions were worse compared to the other days. For this reason, one hour before the opening, I went back to my interoceptive awareness meditation. I could control my bodily tensions before starting the first show by focusing on blood and gravity.

Looking back over the two-month rehearsal adventure, I managed to keep my anxiety and self-confidence at a level that I desired. However, I could not use the text as intensively as I wished. In the future, I know that if I keep the intention to be mindful in my mind and body, my artistic challenge will not become a challenge anymore and I will be able to shift to an actor without anxiety issues.

## **5. SELECTED JOURNAL EXCERPTS**

### **1. January 31, Thursday**

We continued on reading the text. Word exercises seemed helpful before. But now we are repeating the same thing over and over again. How are we going to integrate this exercise to the play? Personal stories have been told. Maybe for character creation the words can be useful as images. Words like episcopal, mitre, vestments, gilded, disobedience, crown, innocence, evil might live in the body of The Bishop.

### **2. February 2, Saturday**

We mainly worked on stage entrances and exits today. I can't find the logic in this actually. This is a good exercise for the director. But for actors, I don't know! We are seeing an artificial structure on the stage.

### **3. February 8, Friday**

Sabrina and I did intimacy exercises today in the afternoon. We both seemed to be comfortable. It is a good sign. Less anticipation of anxiety on this scene! We improvised some intimacy moments.

In the afternoon we blocked the first scene roughly. But how can we start blocking this soon? We didn't even finish the table work. If I don't feel comfortable in the text, where will I find the authenticity?

### **4. February 9, Saturday**

Word exercise continues. We randomly choose words and talk about them. Why don't we do our dramaturgical duty and divide the script and talk about objectives and given circumstances?

### **5. March 12, Tuesday**

We are in the big stage now. But I can't feel present on the stage. My anxiety is increasing. I need to walk with cothurni more to feel more comfortable in them. The play continues to build by blocking and cue-to-cues.

### **6. March 13, Wednesday**

Eric was there, gave us notes. My voice was tensed. I will work on larynx suspension more. Got an email from the director. I could really enter her mind this time. She asked me a few questions about the character. I already answered many of them and I am trying to integrate them. But while playing in between images, it is hard to stay present. Director wants more urgency and fear in the play. But it needs to come from a natural place. I can't feel the gloomy atmosphere of the play. Using imagination and connecting with my inner fears through the sensations might work for me.

### **7. March 14, Thursday**

We finally worked a bit more on the tenth, eleventh and twelfth scenes. But we mainly blocked again... I imagined outside of the brothel as a stormy ocean and pictured myself drowning in it. It helped me to feel the urgency and fear intensely. I will also integrate new tools to my character work. Maybe animal or element works to find the body of my character!

### **8. March 20, Wednesday**

Today we had our first run. I feel much better now. I used psychological gestures to find the nuances of my character. The director didn't even give me notes. Well it is not a bad sign...

Gestures were built from a very personal place. I transferred my own objectives to the character and created a channel between me and 'Jean'.

Some changes happening in the play. The Envoy looks more powerful; now she watches the whole play from the audience. We didn't discuss enough the dramaturgical choice of the director about it. Is it going to change the meaning of the play?

### **8 March 21, Thursday**

More concentration needed. I missed my cue in the eleventh scene and forgot my line. It shouldn't happen again. In the first scene I need to balance my impulses too. I think it is too late to improvise and make new choices. But my objectives always lead me to new journeys. In scene twelve, I salute The Chief of Police by drawing a cross with my hands. My impulse doesn't justify the gesture. But I need to stick with it in order not to match with The Judge and The General. To feel more present on the stage, I need to do more affirmation-focused meditations and use my psychological gesture to bring more fluidity to my character. I started to surrender to the process. I accepted what ever it is and reminded myself of my affirmations. I am that I am!

### **9 March 25, Monday**

My voice isn't deep enough. I couldn't feel my center. People were nervous. We have been receiving new technical notes. I did more core exercises and breathing exercises. I felt more present on the stage. I need to open my channels and connect with my senses more. I need to go back to my introceptive awareness meditations and more yoga-oriented exercises.

The audience was alive and in constant response to what was happening on the stage. My anxiety started to decrease after the first scene after the audience's reactions. Today was a day with positive and negative external factors that affected the level of my anxiety.

## 6. SELECTED WORKING SCRIPTS

## Image 1

Girl Would you go to the police?  
A terrible scream.

Irma They're at it again. I'll have to go and shut them up.

Bishop That was a real scream.

Irma Was it? How can we ever know? Anyway, what difference does it make?

Bishop Mirror Mirror on the wall, why do I come here? To find evil? To find innocence?

Irma It's late. It's getting more and more dangerous.

Bishop Just one more minute.

Irma You've already been here two hours and twenty minutes. That's twenty 'one more minutes' over your time.

Bishop Leave me alone. Listen at the door if you want to - I know you do anyway, and don't come back until I've finished.

Irma exits.

Now answer me. Do I come here to find innocence and evil? Here in the sight of God, I swear - I have never, never aspired to the episcopal throne. If I had wanted to become a bishop, I would have had to put all my energy not into being one, but into acting in the sort of way that would have led to my becoming one. A function is only a function. It isn't a mode of being.

Irma enters

Irma Have you finished

Bishop Fuck off! I'm searching my soul.

Irma That does it! You've got to go.

Bishop Don't be ridiculous. I haven't finished.

Irma Look, I'm not quarrelling just for the fun of it. I'm telling you, you've got no time to lose.

Bishop What you mean is, you need the room for someone else.

Irma That's no business of yours. I'm telling you, it's dangerous to hang about in the streets, whoever you are.

Evil / Innocence  
7

7 The want to play stopped.  
Obstacle: Rebellion outside, and Irma

I am almost out of tactics.

I want to stay forever

I offer money here / Tactic

The first sign of him that he can accept the offer. (later) do become the real Bishop.

Acting like Bishop, filling gap to be loved, do be important.

Eagle is the Bishop

Croak is his claws.

Mouse is his man.

Now the tragic mistake  
His obstacle: temper  
A mouse gets angry when it is desperate.

he is jealous. He thinks he has a better connection with Irma  
\* That's why he resents.

Irma's reaction

Image 2

The Grand Balcony  
Irma  
The Bishop,  
Rosine (The Bishops Girl)

Gilded vs. Grey  
The Bishop Garman

Bishop: O mitre! Bishop's arched crown! Remember- that when my eyes close for the last time, it is you I shall see my beautiful gilded hat!

Irma: That'll be two hundred.

Bishop: Ssh!

Irma: Two hundred, and stop fucking around, or I'll start. And you know what that means.

Bishop: Thanks a lot (taking off the mitre).

Irma: Steady with the props... that's got to last.

Bishop: They say that this place is going to be surrounded. The rebels have already crossed the river.

Irma: There's blood everywhere... I'd keep to the wall, if I were you. And go through the fish market.

A scream of pain from offstage.

I told them to keep quiet. Thank God I had the window padded.  
And what did we manage this evening? A benediction? A prayer? A Mass?

Girl: There was a benediction Madam, and then my confession...

Irma: That's all! Then why can't anyone watch? Just once?

Bishop: Oh no. Such things must remain secret! No one must watch- ever! And all the doors must be shut. Properly shut, closed, buttoned, laced, hooked, sewn. All I'm worried about now is getting home.

Irma: I don't want to die.  
And all I'm worried about is our payment.

Bishop: Only six sins, and far from my favorite ones!

I say favorite to Irma to let her know I have

\*Super Objective\*  
↳ I want power and acceptance  
↳ Obstacle: Social status, family, shyness, anxiety

① I want to stay in the brothel. I feel this place is my home.

② I want Irma to leave me alone. I can't say it directly. She owns the brothel.  
obstacle

I don't want to die. But I am already dead outside.

③ My dad's is to create fear of losing a client for Irma  
(Ritual: Whole scene is a

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8. APPENDIX A: AWARENESS LOG

**Awareness Log**

Situation (describe):				
Emotions (circle):				
Anxious	Inadequate	Angry	Lonely	Guilty
Worried	Inferior	Frustrated	Unloved	Ashamed
Nervous	Worthless	Hopeless	Embarrassed	Discouraged
Body Sensations (describe):				
Automatic Thoughts		Alternatives		

## 9. APPENDIX B: AFFIRMATIONS

I am a creative artist.

I have ability to radiate.

Lifting my arms above me I soar over the earth.

Lowering my arms I continue to soar.

In the air moving around my head and shoulders I experience the power of thought.

In the air moving around my arms and chest I experience the power of feelings.

In the air moving around my legs and feet I experience the power of will.

I am that I am.